

2000

The Importance of Community Building in the EFL Classroom

Svitlana Trofymenko

The School for International Training

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/ipp_collection



Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), [First and Second Language Acquisition Commons](#), and the [Interpersonal and Small Group Communication Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Trofymenko, Svitlana, "The Importance of Community Building in the EFL Classroom" (2000). *MA TESOL Collection*. 417.
https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/ipp_collection/417

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the SIT Graduate Institute at SIT Digital Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in MA TESOL Collection by an authorized administrator of SIT Digital Collections. For more information, please contact digitalcollections@sit.edu.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY BUILDING IN THE EFL
CLASSROOM

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING DEGREE AT THE
SCHOOL FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAINING
BRATTLEBORO, VERMONT

BY

SVITLANA TROFYMENKO

JUNE 2000

© SVITLANA TROFYMENKO 2000

This project by Svitlana V. Trofymenko is accepted in its present form.

Date: June, 2010

Project Advisor: Jack Millett

Project Reader: Toni A. Sloan

Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank the following people for their contributions to this project.

My colleagues and students in Ukraine.

My teachers and classmates at the Summer Masters in Arts at the School for International Training.

I would especially like to thank Jack Millett and Toni Sloan.

ABSTRACT

This paper argues that success in the EFL classroom depends less on techniques and materials, and more on the relationships between the class members and the educational climate. It asserts that, because the creation of a sense of community facilitates learning in different ways, the most important task of a teacher is to foster a sense of community between students in the language classroom as well as to challenge them with linguistic tasks. A classroom community can increase student motivation and self-esteem. It can reduce extreme anxiety and maximize student-student interaction in the EFL classroom. It can also facilitate co-operation in class and make teaching and learning a joyful experience for both teacher and learner.

Secondly, the paper examines the key factors in developing community and suggests a variety of activities that teachers can use to encourage community formation in their classrooms. These key factors are: addressing the learning styles of all students in class, using doable personalized activities, encouraging a sense of belonging to the group, building empathy, maintaining fluidity, building trust and confidence, encouraging positive feelings, fostering learning to listen, and reflecting.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE	
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER TWO	
COMMUNITY.....	7
Defining Community.....	8
The Importance of Community Formation in the Language Classroom	12
CHAPTER THREE	
KEY FACTORS IN DEVELOPING COMMUNITY.....	31
Addressing the Learning Styles of All Students in the Class	33
Using Doable Personalized Activities.....	39
Encouraging a Sense of Belonging to the Group	44
Building Empathy	49
Maintaining Fluidity (Maximizing Student Interaction)	53
Building Trust and Confidence	62
Encouraging Positive Feelings	67
Fostering Learning to Listen	70
Reflecting on One's Learning	74
CHAPTER FOUR	
CONCLUSIONS.....	81
APPENDIX.....	87
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	96

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

“We become teachers for reasons of the heart.
But many of us lose heart as time goes by.
How can we take heart, alone and together,
So we can give heart to our students and our world,
which is what good teachers do?”
(Palmer 1998, 10)

Essentially, teaching is about working with other human beings.

When I think back on my own experiences of being taught, it is the teaching techniques that I remember least. I certainly remember teachers who made subject matter come alive through their great knowledge and enthusiasm.

But the teacher I recall with the most pleasure and respect was the one who listened to me, who encouraged me, who respected my views and decisions, who was basically, "himself in class." My memories of his lessons are of what I did, rather than what he did, of my learning rather than his

teaching. Thus I have reached the conclusion that good teachers know about the subject matter and about methodology, but also have an awareness of how individuals and groups are thinking and feeling within their class. They actively respond to this in their planning and working methods and in building effective working relationships and a good classroom atmosphere. Their own personalities and attitude are an active encouragement to the learning.

I have found that success in the EFL classroom depends less on techniques and materials and more on what goes on inside and between the class members and on what they agree to. The most important task of a teacher is to foster a sense of community between students in the language classroom as well as to challenge them with linguistic tasks. A sense of community can increase student motivation and self-esteem. It can reduce extreme anxiety and maximize student-student interaction in the EFL classroom. It can also encourage co-operation in class, and make teaching and learning a joyful experience for both the teacher and the learner. These are a number of critical factors for teachers to take into account to encourage community formation in their classroom:

- Addressing the learning styles of all the students in the class

- Using doable personalized activities
- Encouraging a sense of belonging to the group
- Building empathy
- Maintaining fluidity(maximizing student-student interaction)
- Building trust and confidence
- Encouraging positive feelings
- Fostering learning to listen
- Reflecting on one's learning

This paper had its origins in questions I started asking myself during the first few days of the Summer Master of Arts in Teaching (SMAT) program at the School for International Training (SIT). During these days students were asked to do a great number of activities that seemed unrelated to the academic study we were venturing into. We joined hands, moved and danced around in a circle, gathered information about the campus and presented skits. At first I thought these tasks were designed to have students socialize and get to know each other. Later, I came to the conclusion that they were an attempt to develop such positive characteristics as mutual trust, confidence in self and in the group, empathy within the group, and the building of a group identity; in other words, encouraging and accelerating

the formation of a learning community. I use the term **community** to mean a group that is cohesive and self-reliant, has a sense of responsibility and is able to overcome problems and difficulties without recourse to the teacher, is tolerant of all its members, has a sense of fun, and is committed to reinforce its members to express their individuality.

The Summer Master of Arts in Teaching (SMAT) program is a very challenging and powerful experience, requiring students to ultimately examine themselves and their teaching styles. If students do not feel secure enough to express their individuality or trust each other, they might not be able to have and share their feelings and experiences together. It is in the sharing of ideas, listening to one another, and understanding that the most learning takes place at the School for International Training (SIT). The initial tasks of the SMAT program were very interesting and doable. They gave us the opportunity to become interested in each other and to learn to listen to each other. By the time we began to discuss our teaching, I felt secure and accepted. I felt that I was among brothers and sisters with whom I was eager to share my thoughts, experiences, and ideas.

This rewarding experience encouraged me to start examining the role of community building in the EFL classroom and exploring key factors in

developing community in my classes. I began to search for ways to apply the sense of community I experienced as an SIT student to my own teaching. Stevick's and Rardin's discussion of Curran's ideas helped me become aware of the importance of community building in the classroom (Rardin1988). Somé's research on healing and community and Palmer's article on evoking the spirit helped me clarify my understanding of community (Somé1993, Palmer1998). Larsen-Freeman and Long's overview of research on affective factors which influence the language learner allowed me to deduce that students' motivation could be increased through the formation of a learning community (Larsen-Freeman1991). Scovel's research on affect helped me realise that extreme anxiety in the language classroom could be reduced with the help of community building among the class members (Scovel1978). Freeman's discussion of how a language class evolves and Grave's example of structuring activities gave me a lot of useful ideas on how to foster a sense of community in my classes (Freeman1992, Grave1980).

The second Chapter of this paper analyzes the inter-relationship of personality and language learning and gives a definition of community in the language classroom. It also discusses the importance of community formation in the class and shows how a sense of community facilitates

learning by increasing student motivation and self-esteem, reducing extreme anxiety, maximizing student-student interaction, encouraging co-operation, and making the teaching and learning process a joyful experience for both teacher and learner. Chapter Three examines key factors in community formation in the EFL classroom and suggests different activities to explore each factor and to encourage the development of a learning community in my classroom. In Chapter Four I make some suggestions for teachers who are interested in building community in the classroom and dwell on the most important things I have learned from doing this project.

CHAPTER TWO

COMMUNITY

"A community is a place of self-definition. Any group of people meeting with the intention of connecting to the power within is a community" (Somé1993, 67).

As a language teacher I am privileged to work with a vital and fascinating subject matter, language. It is social by nature and is the way I express my very being. It is the way I come to terms with the world. It is the way I make my understanding of life concrete and it is the way I make contact with other human beings.

Education of any kind needs to reflect life and one way of achieving this is by "humanizing" the learning and teaching process. Fostering a sense of community in the language classroom is a way to connect people and help them learn to care about each other and their learning. It builds a positive atmosphere and creates a supportive and enjoyable learning environment.

When the teaching and learning processes contribute to the forming of bonds

between people, interdependence develops and there are positive repercussions on the social, emotional, and cognitive development of those involved in this process. This chapter gives a definition of community and discusses the importance of community formation in the EFL classroom.

Defining Community

I will never forget one of our group meetings at SIT when a soft quietness descended and the room was bathed in kindness, peace, and support. Then, quietly, one of my classmates began to talk about himself. He was being very vulnerable. He was speaking from the deepest part of himself. The group hung on each word. I had not realized he was capable of such eloquence. When he was finished there was a hush. It went on for a couple of minutes. But it did not seem that long. There was no uneasiness in the silence. Slowly, out of the silence, another student began to talk. She too was speaking very personally, very deeply about herself. She was not trying to heal or convert the first person. She was not even trying to respond to him. It was not he but she who was the subject. Yet I did not feel she had ignored him. I felt as if she was laying herself down next to him on an altar. The silence returned. Then the next student spoke. During the meeting there was a great deal of sadness and grief expressed, but there

was also a lot of laughter and joy. There were tears in abundance.

Sometimes they were tears of sadness, sometimes tears of joy. Sometimes, simultaneously, they were tears of both. And I felt that something very important happened. An extraordinary amount of healing and converting began to occur even though no one was trying to convert or heal. I realized in a very special way that I was important, useful, and confident, and I found out that I was a member of the community which had been born in my group.

Speaking of community, Peck has written, "It was like falling in love. When they enter community, people in a very real sense do fall in love with one another en masse. They not only feel like touching and hugging each other, they feel like hugging everyone all at once." He also emphasizes that when he is with a group of human beings committed to hanging in there through both the agony and the joy of community, he has a dim sense that he is participating in a phenomenon, for which there is only one word. The word is "glory" (Peck 1993,45).

My experience as both a teacher and learner has led me to my own definition of community. **By community I mean a group that is cohesive and self-reliant, that has a sense of responsibility and is able to**

overcome problems and difficulties without recourse to the teacher, that is tolerant of all its members, has a sense of fun, and is committed to encouraging its members to express their individuality.

The most important characteristics of community are:

- The group is cohesive and members have a definite sense of themselves as a group.
- There is a positive, supportive atmosphere. Members have a positive self-image which is reinforced by the group, so that they feel secure enough to express their individuality.
- The members of the group are able to compromise. They have a sense of direction as a group and are able to define their goals in the group, as well as individually.
- Group members are not cliquey or territorial but interact amicably with all the members of the group.
- Members of the group listen to each other and take turns.
- Group members are interested in each other and feel they have something in common.
- The group is self-reliant and has a sense of responsibility. It is able to overcome problems and difficulties without recourse to the teacher.

- The group is tolerant of all its members; members feel secure and accepted.
- Members co-operate in performing tasks and are able to work together productively.
- The members of the group trust each other.
- Individuals in the group are not competitive and do not seek individual attention at the expense of others.
- Group members are able to empathize with each other and understand each other's points of view even if they do not share them.
- The members of the group are tolerant, flexible, and receptive to new ideas.
- The group has a sense of fun.
- Group members have a positive attitude toward themselves as learners, the language and culture being studied, and the learning experience.

Community is not a skill or an approach that I can use in my classroom.

It is my relationship with my students which can make learning an unforgettable and rewarding experience for everyone in the class and enable learners to personally contribute to their learning. It is also an educational

climate where uniqueness and difference are respected and highly appreciated.

The Importance of Community Formation in the EFL Classroom

My experiences of learning at SIT and teaching English in Ukraine helped me come to the conclusion that people can learn, teach, and live in harmony in community. A sense of community is very important and valuable in the EFL classroom because it aids language learning in different ways. It increases student motivation and self-esteem and at the same time reduces extreme anxiety and maximizes student-student interaction in the EFL classroom. It also facilitates co-operation in class and makes teaching and learning a joyful experience for both teacher and learner.

Stevick has written that success or failure in a language course depends less on linguistic analyses and pedagogical techniques than on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom. He has also emphasized that the most important aspect of "what goes on" is the presence or absence of harmony: it is the parts working with, or against, one another(Stevick1998, 4).

Motivation

I believe that a sense of community increases student motivation. The

abstract term "motivation" on its own is rather difficult to define. It is easier and more useful to think in terms of the "motivated" learner. In other words, one who is willing or even eager to invest effort in learning activities and to progress. Observations from my teaching experience helped me understand that the most successful learners are not necessarily those to whom a language comes very easily; they are those who are highly motivated. They are ambitious, very aware of the goals of learning, and direct their efforts towards achieving them. They are willing to tackle challenges and overcome difficulties in order to succeed in what they set out to do.

In foreign language learning, learning may be affected differently by different types of motivation. Two types of motivation are sometimes distinguished: "instrumental" motivation or learning a language because it will be useful for certain "instrumental" goals, such as getting a job, reading a foreign newspaper, passing an examination and "integrative" motivation or learning a language in order to communicate with people of another culture who speak it. It is clear in each study that motivation is very important in language learning success.

A review of literature shows that high motivation may spur learners to

interact with native speakers of the language (Schumann 1986), which in turn increases the amount of input that learners receive (Krashen 1982).

Motivation often leads learners to use a variety of learning strategies that can facilitate greater skill in language learning (Oxford 1990). Motivation encourages greater overall effort on the part of language learners and typically results in greater success in terms of global language proficiency and competence in specific language skills such as listening, reading, and speaking (Tucker, Hamayan, and Genesee 1976). Strong motivation and positive attitudes also help learners maintain their language skills after classroom instruction is over (Gardner, Lalonde, Moorcroft, and Evers 1985).

Motivation is one of the areas which is enhanced by a sense of community and as Stevick indicated, the perception of being part of a group is a strong motivating factor. My experience at SIT confirms this. I became a part of a friendly and supportive group that was centred around studying teaching methods and techniques. Because of this, I personally felt highly motivated to learn as much as I could about the subject under study so that I could contribute my knowledge to the group's growth. I received emotional and other support from my teachers and classmates full-time. I was happy to

give as well as receive. This experience helped me come to the conclusion that fostering a sense of community in the EFL classroom can provide a strong motivating force that makes a contribution of an individual to the learning process greater and aids learning.

The assumption that a sense of community increases student motivation has aided my own teaching. Trying to foster a sense of community in my classroom, I can see how my students' appreciation of being part of a group makes them motivated language learners who enjoy the process of learning more than its product. In the atmosphere of community they eagerly become both producers of knowledge and discerning consumers of what other people claim to know. Since as part of a community, students are collectively, and not only individually involved in the language learning process, their investment in the learning process grows.

Anxiety

I believe that a sense of community reduces extreme anxiety in the language classroom. Being an international student and a non-native speaker in Vermont, I experienced a great deal of anxiety at the beginning of the SMAT program. Too much anxiety caused a self-defeating behaviour which

diverted my energies from the learning task. But some days later I began to have secure relationships with my classmates and teachers. Through this security and trust I entered into an alternative experience in which my initial anxiety was converted into positive energy for the learning task, thereby facilitating my learning. It was the sense of belonging to the community and trusting in a counseling relationship that lowered my extreme anxiety, converted it into positive energy for the learning task, and aided my learning.

All the faculty members at SIT were aware of the possibility of learning anxiety. This awareness diminished their impatience with nervous students who seemed unwilling or unable to participate freely. My teachers considered the students' possible anxiety level and tried to lower it rather than raising it through criticism. They created a positive learning environment by not disparaging students in front of others, by learning students' names, by using an encouraging rather than threatening style of questioning, by avoiding over-correction, by avoiding sarcasm and intimidation, by testing fairly what the learners knew rather than asking "trick questions", and by addressing the learning styles of all the students in the class. My group mates and I were also encouraged to create learning

support groups outside of class. These served me as places to share learning strategies, practice the language together with my classmates, prepare projects and professional presentations, and receive great emotional support. Therefore, my experience at SIT helped me deduce that developing a sense of community in any classroom is one of the most effective ways to reduce extreme anxiety and facilitate learning.

In language learning, anxiety is defined as "a state of apprehension, a vague fear" (Scovel 1978, 134). Such apprehension or fear can cause motivation to plummet and attitudes to drift toward the negative. In a downward spiral, low motivation can then lead to poorer performance, which then results in still greater anxiety. Some experts say that anxiety can be helpful rather than harmful. The "good" kind of anxiety is called facilitating anxiety, which can be useful in keeping students alert and on their toes (Scovel 1978). The "bad" kind of anxiety is known as debilitating anxiety because it harms learners' performance in many ways, both indirectly through worry and self-doubt and directly by reducing participation and creating overt avoidance of the language. The research into the relationship of anxiety to foreign language learning has proved that an atmosphere of community in the language classroom can help students begin

learning through a childlike trust in the language teacher so that they can accept and submit to the new and strange sounds and patterns of the target language with less resistance and anxiety.

My own teaching experience confirms the assumption that a sense of community reduces extreme anxiety in the language classroom. Most of my adult students usually experience a great deal of anxiety at the beginning of the language learning process. They exhibit extreme anxiety when they are required to use the new language in such activities as oral reports, skits, or role-plays. Learners prone to anxiety when speaking include introverts who do not enjoy interacting with others spontaneously or who dislike performing in front of others. My visual learners, who are very strongly oriented to the printed word and whose oral-aural skills are considerably weaker than their visual skills, also display anxiety when asked to speak without a visual prompt. When learners begin to have secure relationships with one another and the teacher in a positive learning environment of community, their initial anxiety is usually transformed into encouraging vigour for the learning task, thereby facilitating learning.

Self-Esteem

I think that a feeling of community in the language classroom

increases student self-esteem. Self-esteem is defined as a self-judgement of worth or value, based on feelings of efficacy, a sense of interacting effectively with one's own environment (White1985). Low self-esteem is obvious in a statement like, "I sure feel stupid!" High self-esteem is found in a comment such as, "I feel so good about what I just did!" Just like anxiety, self-esteem can be a trait (a global personality characteristic) or a state (related to a particular situation). I find self-esteem very important in foreign language learning because self-esteem can influence motivation and attitudes, and vice versa. Students with high self-esteem seem less inhibited, more willing to take risks in their learning. As Scovel suggests, they tend to fight instead of flee the learning challenge (Scovel 1978). I believe that self-esteem helps learners cope with the effects of their foreign language egos.

When I first arrived at SIT, I lacked confidence and felt insecure about my teaching like most of my students in their first language class. My self-esteem and my self-understanding grew as I felt accepted by my group mates and my teacher in our "Approaches" class. My confidence in myself and in my teaching ability increased along with the process of learning as I shared my experience with my teachers and peers. At the end of the

program I felt that the relationships within our classroom were much stronger and deeper and communication between my classmates was much more open and honest than at the beginning of the program. I was able to work with less fear of taking risks or facing challenges. I was able to take more and more of the responsibility for my own learning rather than assuming that it is someone else's job. Therefore, I came to the conclusion that a sense of community helps create and increase student self-esteem and self-worth.

The research on self-esteem bears out that forming a community is not only a way to lessen anxiety, but also a means to positively change students' perceptions of themselves and their place in the class. Stevick suggests that when a student is able to be helpful to their fellow students, they gain feelings of satisfaction and status which can themselves become powerful sources of reward and motivation (Stevick 1998). Curran submits that acquiring knowledge in the atmosphere of community gives a person an added sense of their own meaning and worth, and they are encouraged to extend or invest themselves further into the new language (Curran 1971).

The study of the relationship of a sense of community to student self-esteem has helped me a lot in my own teaching. When my beginner students

become accepted members of a friendly and supportive group, they say they begin to feel more confident and helpful to their classmates. Their awareness of being valued and respected by their peers is a strong confirmation of their own self-worth. Thus they gain feelings of satisfaction and status which become powerful sources of reward, confidence and motivation for them. So, I believe that I can help my students develop higher self-esteem by fostering a sense of community in the classroom and by training them to set reasonable goals and assess their own progress toward these goals realistically and positively.

Student-Student Interaction

I think that an atmosphere of community maximizes student-student interaction in the EFL classroom. Five types of student grouping were common in our community at SIT: the whole class working together with the teacher; the whole class mixing together as individuals; small groups (three to eight people); pairs; individual work. In our lessons teachers included work that involved a number of those different arrangements. Varying groupings enabled a variety of rewarding experiences for my classmates and me.

When the whole class was working together with the teacher, a

teacher-controlled session was taking place. Everyone in the class was focused, and the teacher was sure that they could all hear what was being said. I was usually getting a good language model from the teacher and that grouping was very dynamic.

Pair work seemed to immediately increase the amount of my practice. It allowed me to use language and also encouraged my co-operation with other students, which was itself important for the atmosphere of the class and for the motivation it gave to learning with others. Since the teacher as controller was no longer oppressively present, we could help each other use and learn language. The teacher acted as an assessor, prompter or resource. I could practice language use and joint learning. Pair work encouraged my communicative efficiency and increased my participation.

Group work was my favourite arrangement for a number of reasons. Just as in pair work, there was an increase in the amount of my talking time and a lot of opportunities for me really to use the language to communicate with my classmates. When all the students in a group were working together to complete a task, we were communicating with each other and more importantly co-operating among ourselves. I was teaching and learning in the group, exhibiting a degree of self-reliance that simply would not have

been possible when the teacher had been acting as a controller. My whole person was deeply engaged together with my classmates in the learning process where there was a concern for my feelings and values, where I took part in setting goals and objectives, and where my self-awareness and the understanding of others grew.

In some ways group work is more dynamic than pair work. There are more people to react to in a group and, therefore, a greater possibility for discussion. There is a greater chance that at least one member of the group will be able to solve a problem when it arises, and working in groups is potentially more relaxing than working in pairs, for the latter puts a greater demand on the student's ability to co-operate closely with only one other person. It is also true to say that group-work tasks can often be more exciting and dynamic than some pair work tasks. Group work offers enormous potential. It can be used for oral work, tasks where decisions have to be made, joint reading tasks, listening tasks, co-operative writing, and many other things. It also has the great advantage of allowing different groups of students to be doing different things in the same classroom.

My SIT learning experience allowed me to realize that interrelationships within the group are very important. It is fundamental to

successful learning to have support and co-operation from the group and a harmonious relationship among its members. If there is a trusting, positive, supportive rapport amongst the learners and between the learners and the teacher, then there is a much better chance of useful interaction happening. Therefore, an atmosphere of community maximizes student-student interaction in class.

The research reveals that “learning is persons”. Curran points out that the learning process is not thought of as simply an acquiring of defined bodies of knowledge and skills, nor as a “games-we-play” adversary relationship, but as an interaction or “interflow” of persons. Teachers and students are both seen in their total personalities, deeply engaged together in the learning process. They are considered to have not only intellectual capabilities, but emotional and somatic reactions as well – all invested in the relationship (Curran 1971). Rardin suggests that by consciously recognizing that learners are knowers in their own right, particularly in their unique learning process, and that by genuinely becoming learners of them, the teacher conveys deep regard for them as persons (Rardin 1988).

An atmosphere of community has aided my own teaching greatly. On the one hand, a sense of community helps me vary the types of student

groupings easily because it encourages a friendly, relaxed learning environment. On the other hand, it allows my students to be deeply engaged in the learning process as “whole persons” and to act as a pool of resources for each other. Thus a feeling of community increases student-student interaction in class thereby smoothing the path of learning.

Co-operation

I presume that a sense of community facilitates co-operation in the classroom. Co-operating with others while learning a foreign language seems to me to be crucial. The learner strives to learn to co-operate with the teacher, with fellow students, and with native speakers of the language who are not connected with the classroom situation. Co-operating with peers in the classroom is a special instance of co-operation. It involves either a co-operative task structure, in which group or team of participants work together on different aspects of the same task, or sometimes a co-operative reward structure, in which participants receive a common reward for their efforts. Speaking from my experience as both a teacher and learner, co-operative learning groups foster a sense of positive interdependence and mutual support. Some studies outside the language field have demonstrated some benefits of co-operation in the classroom such as higher self-esteem;

increased confidence and enjoyment; more respect for the teacher, the school and the subject; greater and more rapid achievement; use of higher-level cognitive strategies; decreased prejudice; and increased mutual concern (Oxford1990).

My experience while learning in community led me to the conclusion that, in the language area, classroom co-operation has the following additional advantages: stronger motivation, increased satisfaction for teachers and students, more language practice, more feedback about language errors, and greater use of varied language functions. I think that wholehearted co-operation in our classes was very useful and positive because it enabled me to learn from others and from working through my own mistakes. I think that my teachers could concentrate more on the process of learning than simply on a plunge towards the "right answers". The result of a learning exercise became less important to me than the process of getting there. While co-operating with my peers I felt a supportive atmosphere of warmth and belonging. I was never isolated or alone, but rather always sensed a strong encouragement, help, and public approval. I felt I was a welcomed and caring member of the group and a useful resource for my classmates. Thus I deduced that community helps learners foster co-

operation in the language classroom because it assists them to become comfortable with others. The more EFL students work together in community, the greater their opportunities for interaction in the target language in the classroom.

The research bears out that real learning does not happen until students are brought into co-operation with the teacher and with each other. We cannot learn deeply and well until a community of learning is created in the classroom. Stevick suggests that when a student is able to be helpful to their fellow students, they gain feelings of satisfaction and of status which can themselves become powerful sources of reward and motivation (Stevick 1998).

The study on co-operation in the classroom has helped me foster participation, teamwork, and contribution with the help of community development in my own teaching.

Joyful Experience

I am of the opinion that a feeling of community makes teaching and learning a joyful experience for both the teacher and the learner. I think that teaching and learning can and should be a joyful experience for both the teacher and the learner, and most teachers, with the exception of the very

lucky or the very talented, know from bitter experience that there is not a more miserable teaching experience than to be shut up inside the four walls of a classroom with a prickly and uncooperative group. The key to learning is to learn without even realizing it, to be engaged in such a joyful, secure, and interesting process of learning that it goes on naturally with fun, ease, and at an accelerated rate. Without a joyful, secure environment, anxiety and fear can impede students' participation and hinder their learning. If both teacher and learner are excited, relaxed, and having fun, a mutual sense of security is fostered.

When I was a student at SIT all my group mates and I were respected by the faculty members as "whole persons"; that is, our teachers considered not only our feelings and intellect, but also had some understanding of the relationship among our physical reactions, our instinctive protective reactions, and our desire to learn. They were guided by the knowledge that each learner is unique and created an acceptable atmosphere in the classroom. Our teachers invited us to talk about how we felt during the lesson, listened to us actively rather than being tape recorders, and tried to understand what each student said and felt. They were in the classroom solely for the purpose of facilitating the use of our own resources. All the

faculty members had the patience and wisdom to listen, to watch, and to wait until the individual student's line of thought became apparent. They spurred us to teaching by bringing our inner feelings into the tasks, making us hunger for learning, and wanting to possess it. Therefore, my learning became incomparably more joyful and easier because it was built on such a dynamic basis. In fact, it became part of the unfolding pattern of my personality, just as night follows day. The teachers provided the creative atmosphere in which I could explore the experience of community. This joyful learning experience as well as my observations from teaching Ukrainian students, allowed me to assume that a sense of community makes teaching and learning a creative and wonderful adventure for both teacher and learner.

Rardin suggests that learning is a self-engagement of the head and the heart, emotions and instincts as well as the intellect and reason, with the material of learning. Learners must be enabled to personally invest in what they are learning (Rardin 1988). This assumption has helped me respect my own students as "whole persons", thereby making their learning and my teaching an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

In this chapter I have given a definition of community in the language

classroom. I have also discussed the importance of community formation in the class and have shown how a sense of community facilitates learning by increasing student motivation and self-esteem, reducing extreme anxiety, maximizing student-student interaction, encouraging co-operation, and making the teaching and learning process a joyful experience for both teacher and learner.

CHAPTER THREE

KEY FACTORS IN DEVELOPING COMMUNITY

“Without a community you cannot be yourself. The community is where we draw the strength needed to effect changes inside of us. Community is formed each time more than one person meets for a purpose. Development of community depends on what the people involved consent to. What one acknowledges in the formation of the community is the possibility of doing together what is impossible to do alone” (Somé 1993, 63).

This chapter examines key factors in developing community in the EFL classroom and suggests different activities to explore each factor and facilitate a sense of community in the language classroom.

The previous chapter analysed the interrelationship of personality and language learning, discussed the importance of community building in the class, and showed how a sense of community facilitates learning.

Sylvia Ashton-Warner in her famous philosophy of education, *Teacher*, wrote, "When I teach people, I marry them. To do what I want them to do they need to be like me. More than that. They have to be part of me. We have to be one thing. One organ. And physically they have to be

near to teach each other and to me"(Ashton-Warner 1986, 209). For me this is an ideal formula of community with human relations between teacher and students which I was fortunate to have experienced at SIT. My teachers were part of my group-mates and me because they understood and respected me and gave me their hand whenever I needed it. On the other hand, I felt I was part of my teachers because they needed my classmates and me to widen their creative vent. In light of this experience, I began to ask myself, "How can I foster a sense of the community like the one I experienced at SIT in my own classroom? What can help me become closer to my students? What are the key factors in developing community?"

Kolb's experiential learning theory helped me realize the central role that experience plays in the learning process (Kolb 1984). Palmer's philosophy of teaching allowed me to deduce that community is a foundation stone of the educational enterprise (Palmer 1993). Somé's research on healing and community and Palmer's article on evoking the spirit helped me clarify my understanding of community (Somé 1993, Palmer 1998). Freeman's discussion of how a language class evolves and Grave's example of structuring activities gave me a lot of useful ideas on how to develop a sense of community in my classes (Freeman 1992, Grave

1980).

The research above as well as observations from my learning and teaching led me to the conclusion that **the key factors in developing community in the EFL classroom are:**

- Addressing the learning styles of all students in the class
- Using doable personalized activities
- Encouraging a sense of belonging to the group
- Building empathy
- Maintaining fluidity (maximizing student interaction)
- Building trust and confidence
- Encouraging positive feelings
- Fostering learning to listen
- Reflecting on one's learning

Addressing the Learning Styles of All Students in the Class

Any group of students, brought together for the first time, will have different expectations of what learning a language involves and what they want out of the course. Some members of the group may want to study grammar rules, while others think that the way to learn English by listening and speaking, and forgetting all about boring old grammar. Some people are

intuitive language learners. Then, some learners are visual types, whereas in others auditory memory is more developed. If each type thinks that his or her style is the only way to learn, then there is the potential for resentment and conflict.

I have found that it is critical to help learners understand how aims, attitudes, and learning styles may differ and to encourage them to start thinking about how they as a group can reconcile what may be conflicting aims and interests.

To make a start on this process I have developed some activities which can help students become aware of different attitudes to learning and different styles within the group. They can allow the group to become tolerant of all its members and the members to feel secure and accepted. They can also encourage the group to become self-reliant and have a sense of responsibility, which, itself, can foster community formation in the language classroom. Using Rardin's terms, only where uniqueness and difference are valued and encouraged will authentic community learning exist (Rardin 1988).

What kind of person are you?

The aim of this exercise is to get students thinking about the ways personal styles, tastes and preferences are related to character, and are not rational but emotional. At first I give out the questionnaire "What kind of person are you?" (see Appendix A) and ask students to complete it individually. When they have completed it, I ask them to discuss it with a partner, giving their reasons for choosing each category. Then students choose one question from the questionnaire, mingle around the class, ask the question they have chosen to all their group mates and make some generalizations. In the whole group, students tell about their generalizations. For example, Ann might say, "I found five "tea people" in our group. They are "tea people" because they can't live without it. They usually drink more than five cups of tea every day." There may be a variety of theories and generalizations advanced in the group discussion stage. I don't think there are any right or wrong answers, although the questionnaire highlights some differences that may affect learning styles: rational/emotional, left brain/right brain, sight/sound, tidy/muddy, organized/disorganized, rule-oriented/spontaneous.

This activity helps my students become aware of different tastes, personal styles, preferences, and attitudes to learning within the group. They leave the class feeling respected and accepted by everyone in the group in spite of all their differences.

What kind of language learner are you?

The general aim of this activity is to sensitize students to each others' different needs and preferences and increase awareness of different approaches to learning so they won't reject any learning styles and attitudes as inappropriate in order to impose a uniform approach on the group. I usually give out copies of the questionnaire "What kind of language learner are you?" (see Appendix B) and ask students to complete it individually. I also emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers, but the answers will depend on individual taste and personality. When students have finished, I ask them to share their answers with a partner, discussing any differences and the reasons for them. Then I bring the activity into a class discussion by asking each student to explain how her partner feels about language learning. I try to expand the discussion into a consideration of differences in approach and learning style, the reasons for these, their relation to personal

differences of temperament and character, and the need to accommodate all these differences in the group program.

My students usually go away from the discussion aware of the need to compromise but confident that I am thinking about them as individuals and will be doing my best to integrate their different wants and needs into a coherent program. They do not leave the class feeling depressed about the conflict of opinions and prepared to fight to get what they want. I like to collect the completed questionnaires at the end of the discussion and to use these as a basis to build up a group profile. Then I write a letter to the group or an individual letter to each student, discussing what they have written on the questionnaire, outlining various activities we could do in the lessons together, and inviting replies. I often do individual interviews sometime in the first week.

What do I want?

I usually write the following on the board and ask my students to copy and complete it for themselves:

LONG-TERM GOAL

By the end of the course I want to...

My first step towards this goal is...

SHORT-TERM GOAL

This week I will therefore ...

Then I ask students to discuss and comment on their long- and short-term goals in groups or pairs to check that they are realistic and achievable. I help students by giving examples and/or brainstorming possible weekly goals. Possible examples of weekly goals: reading one book in English, starting and using a vocabulary notebook, writing an essay and a letter in English, and so on. After that I open the discussion up to a whole-class discussion on which goals are common to the group as a whole or can be accommodated into a group syllabus and which goals are private and need self-study.

On the one hand, this activity is helpful to my students because it encourages them not only to think about their own aims and define them more clearly but also to think in terms of group aims and strategies. It helps them decide what are group aims and what are private aims, and think how they can co-operate with each other to achieve these aims. It encourages students to set goals for themselves and for the group, to assess at intervals whether these goals have been met, and to reset them if they were too ambitious. On the other hand, this activity is useful for me as a teacher because it helps me somehow weave my students' individual wants and

needs together into a coherent program which satisfies everyone in the group.

Using Doable Personalized Activities

As Palmer suggests, teachers can evoke the spirituality of any discipline by teaching in ways that allow the “big story” told by the discipline to intersect with the “little story” of the student’s life. Doing so not only brings up personal possibilities for connectedness but also helps students learn the discipline more deeply. He also believes that language does not happen when the subject is disconnected from the learner’s life (Palmer1998, 9). Speaking from my own experience, a group is more likely to become a community and work productively if its members know a lot about each other and are willing to disclose information about themselves. Therefore, I use a lot of materials which invite students to draw on their own personal experience, talk about themselves, and share their own feelings. The personalized activities I suggest below with a concern for personal development, self-acceptance, and acceptance by others can promote friendship, good feeling, and co-operation while providing good language practice.

Circles

I often get my new groups of elementary level students to stand in a circle facing each other in pairs. Then I tell them they have two minutes to find out as much as possible about their partner. They can ask anything they like. When the time is up, I ask them to turn so that they are back to back with their first partner, facing a new partner. They then have to tell their new partner everything they can remember about their first partner. Finally, I get them to sit down in a circle and ask them to say anything they know about anyone else in the circle.

The activity usually goes well because it encourages students gradually to reveal more about themselves and find out more about the other group members. Usually students are happy to make their initial contacts with each other through English, learn names, find out something about other group members, and begin to get to know them in an informal and friendly way. This activity can also create a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere in class.

Clearing the decks

I often start my lesson with the question "How are you?" Sometimes students seem to be unhappy and tell me that they have some problems. I

invite them to think of a few good things and a few that are not so good. I tell them to choose one of each that they are willing to share with a classmate. A good thing doesn't have to be big. Little good things are just fine. I give students a few moments to think, ask them to look down while they are thinking and to look up at me when they are ready. Then I count off the whole class, alternating A's and B's. A's turn to the student on their right. A speaks first, while B listens. Then B speaks while A listens. After that A's turn to the student on their left. The new pairs talk and listen. While students are speaking, I am monitoring and providing the language they need.

Students come to class with their heads full of personal concerns. This easy, friendly personalized routine for sharing "what's on top" helps my students get ready to pay attention and shift into the target language. It also makes my students use language spontaneously in a natural way and feel they are speakers of the language. Through counseling I can give them access to a real language and build a classroom "community".

My adjective

I ask students to contribute adjectives that describe people. I write the adjectives up on the board and together, with my students, explain the words

that some students may not understand. I also supply a few of my own adjectives, such as *sleepy, bored, tired, hungry, enthusiastic, happy*. Then I ask students to pick one adjective that best describes them at this moment. I choose one myself and explain why the adjective I have chosen describes me well at the moment. After that students mingle, telling each other which adjectives they have chosen and why it describes them right now. In the whole group, students talk about what a classmate told them.

This activity allows students to share personal feelings and start bonding with each other. It works especially well as a Monday morning wake-up.

The first time

I tell students to think of a “first” in their lives. It might be “my first kiss”, “my first day in school”, “my first lesson in a new language”, “my first drive alone in a car”, or any other “first” that comes to mind. Students mingle, relating their “first” stories. In the whole group, learners talk about what a classmate told them.

This activity allows students to share a special moment in their lives with classmates, thereby letting them become closer to each other.

People we admire

On the board I write, "*I admire people who _____*". In writing, students finish the sentence in as many ways as possible. I usually allow only a few minutes for this phase. Then students mingle, telling one another about the qualities they most admire in people. In plenary, students talk about a person in their lives, a character in a book, a figure from history, or a famous person who has some of the qualities they admire.

This activity allows students to share thoughts about a person they admire. It is particularly interesting in multicultural groups. Students reveal a great deal about themselves as they talk about the people they admire. It can easily be used as a pre-reading activity when the passage to be read deals with an admired personality.

As Tirone suggests, it is not sufficient for the student to learn the subject matter as something abstract and external to the self. Instead the learning must be taken into the self so that it becomes part of the learner, with the result that the learner can operationalize it (Tirone 1984). Students bring a lot with them. They all have their own ideas, opinions, experiences, and areas of expertise. All of this is important to them. What they need from the English language classroom is the language to express all this, and

thereby themselves, in English. I believe that all the above mentioned personalized activities encourage my students to express their ideas freely, allow them to use language spontaneously in a natural way, and feel that they are real speakers of the English language. On the other hand, these exercises help me create an effective learning environment which itself leads to community formation in my classroom.

Encouraging a Sense of Belonging to the Group

My experience as both a teacher and learner helped me come to the conclusion that for a group to begin to feel a sense of community, it must have a definite impression of itself as a group. Not only that but the individuals who comprise it must have a sense of belonging to the group as well as a sense of their place within it. A strong sense of belonging to the group can create a warm and positive group feeling, foster a supportive and enthusiastic atmosphere which is conducive to learning, and encourage community formation in the language classroom. Obviously, there are limits to what the teacher can do as the building of a group identity depends ultimately on the individuals in the group and the chemistry between them. But I believe that groups are more likely to be cohesive and amicable if their members have some things in common. So I can bring people in my

classroom together by emphasizing the qualities they share rather than what is different about them. Therefore, I would like to present three activities I use in my classes to give the group this kind of positive self-image and sense of identity, as well as to give the individual student a sense of belonging to the group.

Palmer suggests that community emerges when we are willing to share the real concerns of our lives (Palmer 1999). I think that the activities below let my students become closer to each other and start sharing their worries and interests.

Happy tribes

I divide a class into two or three groups and ask each group to decide on a tribal name for themselves, according to a characteristic they all share: for example, "The Opera Buffs", if they all like opera, or "The Snub Nose Tribe" if they all are snub-nosed, etc. When they have all decided, the other group or groups must guess what they are called. They can ask up to 15 questions, such as: "Is it something to do with your appearance?", "Is it because you all like classical music?" The tribe whose name is being guessed may only say "Yes" or "No". When the others have found the principle behind the name, they may have three guesses at the name. This

time the tribe may be a little more helpful, telling them if they are nearly right, if any words in the title are right, and so on. Students go on until each group's name has been guessed.

This activity helps my students find some things in common thereby, fostering a sense of identity. It may be used throughout the course, though it is better used in the first couple of weeks when students are still unacquainted with each other and when it is important to establish the beginning of a group identity.

Group history

I find out how old the oldest student in the class is and divide the number of years since they were born by the number of students in the class to give me a time period for each student. For example, if my oldest student is 30 and I have 15 students in the class, I will have 15 periods of 2 years. I assign a time period to each student by writing dates on the top of each small piece of paper, for example, 1969-1970, 1971-1972. Then I make a time chart on the large piece of paper by writing the years in order down one side. In class I give out the small pieces of paper, one to each student. I tell them that they are all researchers working on a history of the life of the group and that they are personally responsible for finding out what happened in the

group life in the years assigned to them. To do this they should get up and move around the room, asking everyone else in the class what was the most memorable thing that happened to them in each of the years they are responsible for. They should write the answers down on the paper. I demonstrate how to do this first by asking a couple of students myself, "What was the most important thing that happened to you in 1989, Kate? Can you remember?" "Yes, I got a big teddy-bear for my birthday". "What about you, Alex? What happened to you in 1990?" "My brother was born!" When everyone has collected their information, I ask them to sit down again. Then I compile the group history by asking students to report back. I write down the information they have collected on the time chart. The students who researched time periods early on in the group's history have less to report. So I can give them something to do by asking them to take over the job of writing in the data on the chart once I have filled in a couple of lines to show them what to do.

This activity can allow my students to foster a sense of belonging to the group as well as a sense of their place within it. It can help me create a warm and positive group atmosphere and encourage community formation in my classes.

One big family

I draw a rough family tree on the board. The tree should be a rough outline of the branches of a family, but without too much specific detail of how many people there are in each generation. Then I ask students to think of the class as a big family, and invite them to position themselves on the family tree according to how they perceive their role in the group, either by coming and standing in that position on the floor, or by writing in their name on the board. I usually give an example and encourage them to begin, by placing myself on the tree and saying, for example, "I'm the grandfather. I sit around and tell everyone else to do all the work." or "I'm the bossy old aunt. I'm always nagging you to get things done and telling you how you should behave." When everyone is in place, I round off the activity by asking everyone to pose in their roles for a class (family) photo.

This activity can contribute greatly to the students' sense of themselves as a group which encourages community formation and facilitates learning in the EFL classroom. It is a great fun when the activity is rounded off by a photo and it is better used a little way into the course when students know each other rather better.

I think that all the above mentioned activities can foster a sense of belonging to the group and give my learners the opportunity to foster a warm and positive group feeling and create a supportive classroom atmosphere.

Building Empathy

Observations from my teaching experience helped me deduce that members of a group are more likely to have a sympathetic, harmonious relationship and feel a sense of community if they make an attempt to understand each others' feelings and points of view. Curran suggests that a knower needs and desires acceptance and understanding as well as appreciation of the value of his or her ideas. When the knower is understood, the creative process from within can unfold (Curran 1971).

In order to develop community building in my classes, I try to create unique situations in which students tell each other about their personal tastes, opinions, lifestyles, and background. This usually has a very positive effect on individual motivation and on group dynamics, as students learn more about each other so that they can see a bit of themselves in their classmates and begin forming social attachments and commitments. I also invite my students to complete questionnaires or write autobiographies, not from their own point of view but as if they were someone else. This helps

them empathize with another student, that is, to step into their shoes and see things through their eyes for a while. I think that the act of putting my students in another's place and looking at things from their point of view leads to a direct and immediate understanding of others. The empathy building activities, suggested below, help me encourage my students to feel relaxed together, learn more about each other, and begin bonding.

A day in your life

I seat students in pairs or ask them to stand in a circle facing each other in pairs. Then I tell them that they may ask five and only five questions about their partner's daily life: their age, job, journey to work or school, routine, and evening pastimes, for example. When they have asked and answered their questions, I invite them to sit down again or to move to a different place if they are seated in pairs. They should then write "A Day in the Life of Their Partner" in the first person, as if they were their partner. They should use the information they got from their partner as a springboard but can use their imagination and powers of empathy to fill out details they do not know. They should try to imagine what life is actually like for their partner and how they feel about it. When they have finished, I pin the

descriptions round the room and invite students to walk around and see if they can identify themselves.

This activity allows my students to empathize with each other and leads them to a better understanding of their group mates. I think it is useful to try both with a new, as well as with a group whose problem is that they know each other too well and feel they have no information gaps left to fill. It is a challenge to see how well the students really know each other.

I am you

I divide my students into pairs and give each a copy of the completion sheet. (see Appendix C) I ask them to fill it out, not for themselves, but for their partner. However, they may not communicate with their partner while completing the sentences but must do it by empathizing with their partner and imagining what they would reply. When they have finished, students should compare their answers, commenting on their accuracy.

This activity obviously produces more accurate answers if students know each other fairly well, but it can also be used as an introductory activity with students, who have only just met, when it becomes more of a guessing game. It helps my students step into their partners' shoes and see

things through their partners' eyes for a while, thereby leading to a direct understanding of others.

How did I feel?

I tell my class an anecdote about an incident in my life which caused me a variety of emotions, for example, fear, anger, embarrassment, or shame. While I tell the anecdote I do not mention at any point how I felt, but just give the bare bones of the story. Then I tell the story again. This time I ask the students to close their eyes and imagine themselves in my place. I usually stop at strategic points and ask them how they feel. Then I invite the students individually to think of an incident in their life that caused them some strong emotions. I give them a little time to think of one and to make notes if they wish. After that I ask them to tell their story to a partner, just as I did, without mentioning how they felt about the incident, merely stating what happened. The partner has to listen with eyes closed, imagining the events are happening to them. Finally, I ask each student to write her partner's story in the first person as if it happened to her, putting in the feelings. I usually pin the stories up around the wall for everyone to read.

This activity can lead my students to begin to feel a sense of community because it encourages them to understand each others' feelings and points of view.

I believe that all the above mentioned empathy building activities can help me create unique classroom situations in which students can understand each other's feelings and points of view.

Maintaining Fluidity

In my opinion one symptom of lack of a sense of community in a group is "territoriality." Some group members show a marked preference for their seats and they are reluctant to move to sit with other people. Cliques may develop in which members are selective about who they work with, sometimes actively refusing to work with certain students. This does not make for community formation and makes the process of organizing discussions and speaking activities difficult. In order to circumvent this problem and foster a sense of community in my classes, from the very first lessons I try to maximize student interaction.

Using Somé's terms, what one acknowledges in the formation of the community is the possibility of doing together what is impossible to do alone (Somé 1993). Learners need to be provided with opportunities for

maximum interaction in order to accelerate their comprehension, production, and understanding of others. I believe that designing group activities is one of the ways to achieve this.

To maintain fluidity in my classes, I try to vary ways of organizing discussion groups through the following techniques:

Buzz groups

A problem is discussed in small groups for a few minutes before views or solutions are reported to the whole class.

Hearing

“Experts” discuss a topical question and may be interviewed by a panel of students who then have to make a decision about that question.

Network

The class is divided into groups which should not have more than 10 students each. Each group receives a ball of string. When the speaker has finished he gives the ball of string to the next speaker, but holds on to the string. In this way a web of string develops, showing who talked the most and who the least.

Fishbowl

All the members of the class sit in a big circle. In the middle of the

circle there are five chairs. Three are occupied by students whose views (preferably controversial) on the topic or question are known beforehand. These three start the discussion. They may be joined by one or two students presenting yet another view. Students from the outer circle may also replace speakers in the inner circle by tapping them on the shoulder if they feel confident that they can present the case better.

Market

All the students walk about the room and each talks to several others.

Onion

The class is divided into two equal groups. As many chairs as there are students are arranged in a double circle, with the chairs in the outer circle facing inwards and those of the inner circle facing outwards. Thus each member of the inner circle sits facing a student in the outer circle. After a few minutes of discussion all the students in the outer circle move on one chair and now have a new partner to continue with.

Star

Four to six small groups try and find a common view or solution. Each group elects a speaker who remains in the group but enters into discussion with the speakers of the other groups.

To vary student groupings in the classroom, to encourage fluid seating arrangements and discourage “territoriality”, I also use reseating games. This technique is a useful way of reallocating seats to students in a way that is fun and apparently random. It is a more indirect and tactful way of reorganizing students into groups or pairs.

Changing places

I prepare small pieces of paper with instructions on them for half the students in the class (a different instruction for each). For example:

Find someone younger than you and sit next to them.

Find someone who can drive a car and sit next to them.

Find someone with fewer brothers and sisters than you and sit next to them.

The instructions can be either very general, as in the above examples, or very specific, based on my knowledge of the students, to enable the “searchers” to find specific people. (In this case, I have to work out in advance exactly who I want to sit next to whom and who is going to be searching and who is going to be found.) I ask alternate students to stand up. The rest should remain seated, so that there is an empty seat next to every seated student. Then I give out the instruction slips to the students who are standing and ask them to find the person described on the slip. To do this,

they will have to move around asking the seated students questions, until they find the person who answers the description on the card.

This activity is useful when students have been working with one partner for some time and I want them to change partners for the next exercise. It can be adapted to any level and used to practice a wide variety of language items. It is most successful when the language it practices is related to the language I am in the middle of teaching. For example, if I am teaching “can”, all the instructions should begin “Find someone who can...”; if I am teaching the past simple, all instructions should begin “Find someone who... yesterday”.

Picture sections

I collect some magazine pictures and cut them into four quarters. I need as many quarter-pictures as there are students in the class. I give out the picture sections at random and ask them to find the three people with the other parts of their picture. To do this, they must describe their pictures to each other without showing them to anyone. When they have found each other, they should sit down in a group together.

This activity often helps me reallocate my students’ seats in a funny and random way. Learners enjoy this technique because it keeps them

talking and guessing.

Departure lounge

I prepare sets of job cards for my students (see Appendix D) taking into account the number of students I have in the class and the number I want in each group. I give out the cards at random to the students and tell them that they are in an airport lounge and have to find the other people they will be traveling with. They do not know what they look like but they know what they do. When they have found all the other members of their group, they should sit down with them.

This is a useful game for getting the students into groups in preparation for another activity. My students like adopting fictional names and occupations around which new identities can be created. It gives my learners more freedom, stimulates their imagination, encourages them to play with the language, enhance their feeling of security, and allows them to be more open.

To ensure that my students talk to everyone else in the room, I use mingling activities. Because a goal is intrinsic to the activity, students have their own purpose in talking to people and thus do not feel that they are being coerced into talking to someone they do not really want to

communicate with.

The “why” game

Students write down a set number of “*why*” questions (five or seven). The questions can be of a personal, professional, or general nature. For example, “Why are there no women in this group? Why is the sky blue? Why is the exchange rate of the dollar going up?” They should be questions for which the student genuinely wants an answer or opinion. Students stand up and mingle around the room, working with different partners in turn. In pairs they ask each other a question that they have written down. Students get a point if they give an answer that satisfies or convinces the questioner. When a question is answered satisfactorily, it is crossed off the list. And the name of the person who answered it is recorded. Learners now change partners and repeat the procedure, either with a new question (if their previous one was satisfactorily answered) or repeating the same question. The game continues until all questions have been answered or until a set time has passed. Unanswered questions can now be opened up to the whole group for discussion. The winner is the person who has answered the most questions satisfactorily.

On the one hand, this activity lets my students use English

spontaneously and feel like they are really speaking the language. On the other hand, it keeps them motivated and allows them to talk to everyone in class because they desperately want to find the answers to their own questions.

Interaction lines

At first each student writes one good question they know the answer to based on something the class has read. Then students stand in two rows facing each other. The students in one row ask their questions, all speaking at the same time. Each partner (standing opposite) answers. (If they can't answer, the student who asked provides the answer.) All answerers move one position to the left, so that each student faces a new partner. The student without a partner moves down the center aisle to the far position of the answerers' line. Each asker asks the new partner the same question. Again answerers rotate. The activity continues until they have asked their question to every student in the answerers' row. After that I ask, "Did anyone get a particularly good answer to their question?" Askers tell the best answers they heard – e.g., "Olga gave me an interesting answer that I hadn't thought of...". The answerers now become the askers, and the activity is repeated.

My students love this activity because they become experts on (and

teachers of) their own piece of information. They also enjoy the lively interchange as everyone talks at once. Even timid students speak up.

Continuums

I write a controversial statement on the board. It may be related to something we have been reading about. For example: "Watching television is a waste of time." "All murderers deserve to die." "Women should do the cooking and cleaning." "Smokers are irresponsible people." "Lying is as bad as stealing." On another section of the board, I draw a horizontal line that represents a continuum. On the left end of the line, I write "agree strongly"; on the right end, I write "disagree strongly". Students write their names along the continuum. I call on five students to defend their positions. Then all students mingle and explain their positions to others. In the whole group, students who changed their minds explain why.

This activity helps my students take risks as they acquire language and enter the world of meaningful discussion in their new language.

Because I have been using reseating games and mingling activities in my classroom for a long time, I have come to the conclusion that they help me maximize student interaction, maintain fluidity, and create a friendly and supportive group atmosphere in which my students can begin to feel a sense

of community.

Building Trust and Confidence

Curran submits that while learning in community students never feel isolated and alone but rather always sense the strong reassurance, help, and positive regard of everyone else. In an almost literal sense, they feel everyone is "pulling" for them and so are delighted by even their minimal successes (Curran 1971). To create such an intense atmosphere of warmth and belonging in class, it is important to establish a climate of trust among the members of the group so that they can feel confident enough to say and do things in front of others without fear. I think this is particularly important in the foreign language classroom as it is very easy to feel inadequate when struggling to speak a foreign language. Obviously, the attitude of the teacher is vital here. Particularly with beginners' groups, who are especially vulnerable to insecurity and nervousness, it is important for me, the teacher, to have a reassuring, encouraging, and comforting manner. But it is perhaps even more important for the group members to feel support, encouragement, and acceptance from the group. I can be as supportive as I like, but if a student knows or feels that every time they open their mouth they will be sneered at by the rest of the group then they will not be inclined to open their

mouth very much.

To provide my students with the experience in which their initial anxiety can be converted into positive energy for the learning task, thereby facilitating learning, I try to use a lot of trust and confidence-building activities in class. These activities can help me build up a classroom climate in which learners accept and trust each other and have enough confidence in themselves and in each other to be able to express themselves without fear of seeming foolish. Moreover, they may feel able to go ahead and make fools of themselves and thoroughly enjoy it. Most of the techniques are non-verbal at least in the initial stages because it is easier to establish a relationship of physical trust between people than to get them to trust each other with things they say. Out of this physical trust will come an emotional trust which may finally be put into words.

Silly Walks

I turn on the music and ask the students to begin walking round. As they do so, I ask them to walk in different ways: on a sandy beach, on a hot surface with bare feet, in ski boots, on ice, in deep snow, in high-heeled shoes, in shoes that hurt, in shoes that are too big, through a river, paddling in the sea, and finally in deep mud. I ask them to imagine they have got

stuck in the mud and can only pull one leg out with great difficulty. As soon as they put that leg down again, it gets stuck again. I suggest that they wave to a friend and ask for help. (I designate half as friends and half as stuck-in-the-muds.) But as their friends come to help them, they get stuck too. Stickily, they try to help each other get out of the mud to drier land.

This activity has a twofold purpose: it aims to develop trust by getting students to help each other out of a sticky predicament and it aims to release inhibitions by putting everyone in the same silly situation.

What I need

Whatever I need, if I gather a group of fifteen people and announce my need I will probably find help, either directly from one of the fifteen or indirectly from someone that they refer me to. So I ask my students what they need. Some of them, for example, have mentioned these needs: a driver's license, a native speaker to practice with, a place to live with cheaper rent, etc. Students write what they need on a piece of paper. I usually encourage them to write more than one need. Students read these papers aloud one by one. As classmates listen, they raise their hands if they think they can help. The reader writes down these names. Then students mingle, talking with classmates who might be able to help them, gathering

information and making plans. In the whole group, volunteers tell what help they have found.

I think this is exciting because people often feel that they are alone with their problems. This activity helps dispel that discouragement. It brings students' real concerns into the classroom. As they ask for and receive help, a climate of cohesion, friendliness, and trust develops.

Look after it for me

I ask students to stand up in two lines facing each other, close their eyes, and think of something that is precious to them. This can be an object they cherish or something more abstract like freedom or family life or the view from a window. It may help to play some quiet music. Then I ask students to imagine they have to leave this thing for a while and they are giving it to someone they trust to look after it until they come back. I ask the students in one line to step forward and mime handing over the object or concept. (Obviously, if it is an object they are handing over, they can be literal about its weight and size; if it is a concept, they will have to be more imaginative.) The student receiving the precious object should handle it very carefully and show their partner how they would keep it safe. Then they reverse roles. When they have finished, I ask them to explain to each other

what it was they were entrusting to the other person and why it is so precious. Finally, I sit them around in a circle and ask everyone to tell the others what they were entrusted with and to describe how they felt on receiving it. The owners can describe how it felt to give it up to their partner.

This activity helps me establish a climate of trust in my classes, so that learners can feel confident enough to say and do things in front of their classmates without fear.

Rardin points out that bonds of trust must be present if there is to be a commitment to and creative fulfillment of the teaching-learning relationship (Rardin 1988). While doing a lot of group work at SIT, my classmates and I learned to value each other's abilities and to rely on each other. My self-esteem and my respect for my group mates and myself grew as we successfully completed tasks together (e.g. skits, presentations, Sandanona, etc.) We developed a sense of responsibility for the groups' learning through becoming, at times, teachers and experts ourselves. We learned to work together, to trust and support each other and we gained an understanding of learning in community. Consequently, to foster a sense of community in my classes, I try to give my students the opportunity to learn to work together, trust and support each other, and build confidence in the

individual and a sense of solidarity in the group through trust and confidence-building activities which focus on group work.

Encouraging Positive Feelings

When I think back on my SIT experiences, I can recall a lot of positive emotions: positive attitude towards my teachers and classmates, positive opinion of the SMAT program, positive reaction to the learning process, and positive feeling about myself as a learner in the community. All these impressions were cultivated by the faculty members' positive demeanor, their respect for every learner, and everyone's desire to learn, understand the others, and appreciate their abilities and experiences. We were tolerant of one another and felt secure and accepted. Using Curran's words, we felt secure and were then freed to approach the learning situation with an attitude of willing openness (Curran 1971). This wonderful adventure in learning led me to the conclusion that community formation is possible when group members have a positive attitude towards themselves as learners, towards the language and culture being studied, and towards the learning experience. Therefore, I try to encourage my students to stay positive in class through smiles, jokes, music, and doable activities. I always draw students' attention to their progress in language use. If they make any

progress, their positive attitude towards the learning process is obviously essential. The humanistic activities below help my students begin to feel a sense of community because they aim at building up and reinforcing positive feelings about one's self and one's abilities, about the language and culture, and about other people in the group.

Gift-giving

Students stand in two lines facing each other. I ask them to imagine a present they would like to give to the person opposite them. When they are ready, I ask them to mime giving the present to the other person. When they have given and received presents, I ask them to tell their partners why they chose those particular gifts for them. All students move one position to the left, so that each student faces a new partner. The student without a partner moves down the center aisle to the far position of the outer line. Each student gives the new partner a new gift. Again students rotate. The activity continues until students have given a gift to every student in the group.

This technique allows my students to strengthen positive feelings about each other in the group. It helps build a pleasant and supportive classroom climate. It is as much fun for students as giving and receiving real presents. It could be particularly useful towards the middle of a term,

when many otherwise happy and outgoing students experience a mid-term slump. It could also be used when a student in the class has a birthday or at the end of a course.

I like it when...

I write a large heading on the poster: "I like it when..." and ask students to close their eyes and think of things they have enjoyed or found interesting about being in an English-speaking country or learning the language. These could be things that have happened to them or things they have noticed about the way people behave or things they like about the language itself. I give them a little time to think quietly, then ask them to join with a partner and write as many endings to the sentence "I like it when..." as they can.

(e. g. I like it when: - people's voices go up when they ask a question
 - drivers stop for me at crosswalks)

When people seem to be running out of ideas, I collect the endings by asking students to call out what they have written and writing them up on the poster. Finally, I pin the poster up on the wall and leave it there.

Students like this activity because it reinforces a lot of positive feelings about themselves, about the English language, and about the culture

of English speaking countries. Learners usually add a lot of new ideas to the poster as the semester goes on.

Paying compliments

I teach students how to pay a compliment in the target language. For example, "I like your red shirt" or "I like your new haircut" or "I like your pronunciation." I also teach the standard response, "Thank you." Then I pin a placard (see Appendix E) to their backs. They should not be allowed to see their own placard. I ask learners to mill around freely, obeying the instructions on each other's back. Students mingle, exchanging compliments until I stop the activity.

Giving and receiving compliments is a rigidly structured bit of sociolinguistic discourse. This activity helps my beginning students to master the formula while they enjoy a little stroking.

I think that all the above mentioned activities allow me to foster positive feelings and create a friendly atmosphere in my classes thereby, developing a sense of community within the learners.

Fostering Learning to Listen

Ueland suggests that listening is a magnetic and strange thing, a creative force. It makes people happy and free when they are listened to.

And if you are a listener, it is the secret of having a good time in society (because everybody around you becomes lively and interesting), of comforting people, of doing them good (Ueland 1992). My teaching and learning experiences helped me deduce that community can be formed in a group where people are good listeners. When people really listen to each other, they move toward each other, become able to empathize with each other, and understand each other's points of view even if they do not share them. People talk more confidently and fluently if their interlocutor is giving them their full attention and in turn will respond more directly and appropriately if they have listened to, and are basing their reply on, what their partner has said.

Some of my students are bad at listening to one another. There could be many overlapping causes for this problem: students could find one another boring; they could be seeing a speaking activity purely as an activity that practices their speaking, without realizing that in order to speak effectively and with confidence a sympathetic audience is the first requirement; they may not find listening to a non-native speaker very productive in terms of their own language learning; they may be so busy thinking out what they are going to say next that they have no time to listen

to their partner; or they could just be exhibiting that very natural human tendency to be more interested in one's own preoccupations than in anyone else's. To counteract this, it is important to teach students to listen. In order to set my students a good example of a listener, I always try to really listen to what they say and let what they say really affect what I do next. My goal is to listen to them actively (i.e. consider not only their feelings and intellect, but also have some understanding of the relationship among their physical reactions, their instinctive protective reactions, and their desire to learn). In order to help my students become aware of the need to listen to each other, I try to create situations where they have to listen closely to the other person. I use the following techniques:

Bamboo telegraph

At the end of a pair work activity, I ask students to change partners and summarize to their new partner what their first partner said. But they have to present their first partners' views as if they are their partner. In other words, to put themselves in their partner's place. Then I ask the second partners to repeat the process, that is, to report back to the class the views they have just heard, again in the first person, as if those opinions are their own. Students put up their hands when they identify "themselves" speaking.

This is a generalizable exercise which can be used in conjunction with any pair or group speaking activity. It teaches my students to listen to each other with their full attention, empathize with each other, and base their reply on what their partner has said.

Listeners

I ask students to think about situations in their lives where they have listened to people or where people have listened to them. Then I give out one questionnaire (see Appendix F) to each student and ask them to think about the questions on it. When they are ready, they discuss their answers with a partner. Finally, I ask each pair to tell the class the most interesting thing that came out of their discussion.

This activity allows my students to realize the importance of listening in everyday life and teaches them to become good listeners.

Speaking to a brick wall or to a sympathetic listener?

I ask students to work with a partner for this exercise. I give out the first set of paired role cards (see Appendix G) and ask them to follow the instructions on the cards. Then I give out the second set of role cards, reversing the roles this time, so each student has the experience of “speaking to a brick wall”. Students in pairs discuss how they felt about the experience

and how it affected their fluency. Pairs give feedback on how they felt to the whole class. After that I ask students to repeat the role play, keeping the same roles as they had in the previous exercise, but this time I change B's role card (see Appendix G). When they have finished, I ask them to discuss their experiences again: How did they feel this time? Was it easier to talk? Did their fluency improve? Did they find more to say?

This is a generalizable technique which can be used in conjunction with any pair speaking activity. It helps my students become aware of the need to listen to each other because it creates situations where they have to listen closely to their partner.

I believe that the exercises above can encourage a sense of community in my classes because they teach my students really listen to each other, move toward each other, and become able to empathize with each other.

Reflecting on One's Learning

Richards defines reflection as a consciously identified period of silence within the framework of the lesson for the student to focus on the learning forces of the last hour, to assess his present stage of development, and to re-evaluate future goals (Richards 1986). Curran submits that reflection allows the "learning space" that a student needs to make the

learning material his own (Curran1976). My experience as both a teacher and learner led me to the conclusion that reflection on one's learning is an essential tool in community development because it gives students an opportunity to see themselves as researchers in their own classrooms, learn a lot about their own learning as well as learning about the language, and become responsible for their learning. Reflection is closely connected with feedback. Feedback helps increase teacher awareness of the students' learning. Reflection allows students to increase their awareness of learning and it encourages students to realize what they have experienced and examine what is going on inside them as they learn.

I believe it is very important for the formation of community to foster the students' process of personal discovery and development. Therefore, in my classes I often try to create situations in which learners are able to consider how they feel and why they feel that way. At the end of the course, I encourage my students to take a more clear sighted look at what they have already done and to formulate their goals for future language learning. I use activities which focus on developing learner strategies and promoting self-reliance. My goal is to raise the students' awareness of how the language works and, more importantly, of how they are learning.

Sharing learning strategies

I ask my students to write down one strategy they have for learning English. Then I ask for a volunteer and tell the other students to try and guess their classmate's strategy by asking "yes/no" questions, such as "Is it reading?", "Do you use a dictionary?", "Do you do it in bed?". When everyone has been questioned, I ask each student to write down two English words, phrases, or sentences that they have learned by the strategy they wrote down at step 1. After that students take from five to ten minutes to work in small groups and tell each other what they have learned through their particular strategy.

This activity allows my students to learn about their own learning and to take charge of it. It increases my learners' awareness of the foreign language learning.

Look how far we've come

I play a tape-recording of students speaking in the earlier days of the course. They are usually pleasantly surprised at the progress they have made.

This activity works best with elementary and intermediate groups, where progress is most dramatic. I think this is a good morale booster at the end of a course.

Concentric circles

I ask students to bring their original list of aims for the term and tick off those they feel they have made progress towards achieving. I also ask them individually to try to identify areas they still need to work on and to try to clarify their future language learning goals. What goals from their original list do they feel they have not yet achieved? What weaknesses do they feel they still have? What are their new goals? Then students stand in two concentric circles. Each inner-circle student is facing an outer-circle partner. The inner-circle students speak first. I say, "You have three minutes to talk about your successes. There's only one rule: Don't stop talking. If you finish early, start over again. If you can't think of the right word, say it in a different way. If you don't have ideas, say, "Ba, ba, ba...". Sooner or later an idea will come to you." I tell the listening partners in the outer circle, "Your job is very important. This is not a conversation, so don't ask questions or talk at all. Just lean forward, let your face show that you are very interested, and listen to your partner." At my signal (clapping hands), all inner-circle students talk simultaneously while their partners listen. At the end of three minutes, I signal again for speakers to stop. I invite listeners to thank their speakers after each phase of this activity. Speakers move one

place to their right. Now they tell the same thing to their new partners in two minutes. They move one place to the right again and tell the same thing to a third partner in one minute. Speakers will have to edit and talk even faster this time. I repeat the procedure with the outer circle as speakers. They will rotate to their right to find new partners. In the whole group, I invite volunteers to tell something they heard from one of their speaking partners.

On the one hand, this activity fosters the students' process of personal discovery and development. On the other hand, it pushes my students to say more than they believed possible.

One-minute feedback

When students come into class, I hand each a blank card. I tell them that at the end of class I will ask them to write on the card what they learned today, what helped their learning and what hindered it, and then give the card to me. At the end of class I allow one minute for each student to write their notes to me.

This activity can give me a valuable feedback about what my students got (and didn't get) from a lesson. At the same time, it reinforces for the students what they have learned, giving them a feeling of satisfaction. Because the time is so short, students are concise, and I need only a few

minutes after class to read their notes and incorporate what they have said into my planning. When students are accustomed to this, when they have come to expect to write me this note, I think they become more aware during the class of what they are and are not learning. This leads to increased student responsibility for their learning and more questions during class.

Reflecting techniques are crucial in my classes because they increase student awareness of their learning, foster student process of personal development, give them an opportunity to become in charge of their own learning, and, therefore, help them begin to feel a sense of community.

In this chapter I have examined key factors in community formation in the language classroom and suggested different activities to explore each factor and to encourage the development of a sense of community in my classroom. By helping students become aware of different attitudes to learning and different styles within the group I encourage the group to become tolerant of all its members, self-reliant and have a sense of responsibility. With doable personalized activities I facilitate students' personal development, self-acceptance, and acceptance by others. By fostering a sense of belonging to the group I give my students the opportunity to create a warm and positive group feeling and promote a

supportive and enthusiastic atmosphere which is conducive to learning.

With empathy building activities I create unique situations in which students make an attempt to understand each other's feelings and points of view.

With reseating games and mingling techniques I try to maximize student interaction in the classroom. With trust and confidence-building activities I build up a classroom climate in which learners accept and trust each other and have enough confidence in themselves and in each other to be able to express themselves. With humanistic exercises I reinforce positive feelings about one's self and one's abilities, about the language and culture and about other people in the class. With listening activities I create situations where students have to listen closely to the other person, realize the need to listen to each other, and become good listeners. Finally, with reflecting techniques I increase student awareness of their learning and give them an opportunity to become in charge of it.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSIONS

Language learning is a lifelong journey with lots of challenges, mysteries, adventures, and unpredictable aspects. It is not simply a one-dimensional intellectual activity but involves the whole person and is constructed over the foundations of students' own earlier learning experiences. Learners are intelligent, fully-functioning humans, not simply receptacles for passed-on knowledge. They may bring not only pen and paper to the lesson, but a lot of other, less visible things: their needs and wishes, their life experience and home background, their memories and worries, their day so far, their anger and toothache, their fears and moods, etc. They make use of whatever knowledge and experience they already have in order to help themselves learn and understand new things. Thus the knowledge taken away from any one lesson can be quite different for different people. The new information is planted in quite different seed

beds. Given the opportunity, every student is able to make important decisions for themselves, to take responsibility for their learning, and to move forward successfully.

Creating a classroom community is a way to make learning a creative experience for everyone in the class and enable students to personally invest in what they are learning. It is an opportunity to build an atmosphere where learning becomes a self-engagement of the head, heart, emotions, instincts, and intellect. It is also a chance to foster a learning environment where uniqueness and difference are valued and encouraged. It is in a community that the relationships within the classroom become stronger and deeper and communication between people becomes much more open and honest. The educational climate becomes positive, forward-looking, and supportive. The learners are all able to work with less fear of taking risks or facing challenges. In doing this they increase their own self-esteem and self-understanding, gradually taking on more and more of the responsibility for their own learning themselves rather than assuming that it is someone else's job. Therefore, the creation of a sense of community is crucial in the language classroom.

My research has led me to the conclusion that a sense of community

in the EFL classroom could be developed due to a great number of different factors. Firstly, by helping students become aware of different attitudes to learning and different styles within the group I can encourage the group to become tolerant of all its members, self-reliant and have a sense of responsibility. Secondly, with doable personalized activities I can facilitate students' personal development, self-acceptance, and acceptance by others. By fostering a sense of belonging to the group I can give my students the opportunity to create a warm and positive group feeling and promote a supportive and enthusiastic atmosphere which is conducive to learning. With empathy building activities I can create unique situations in which students make an attempt to understand each others' feelings and points of view. In addition, with reseating games and mingling techniques, I can maximize student-student interaction in the classroom. With trust and confidence-building activities I can build up a classroom climate in which learners accept and trust each other and have enough confidence in themselves and in each other to be able to express themselves. With humanistic exercises I can reinforce positive feelings about one's self and one's abilities, about the language and culture, and about other people in the class. With listening activities I can create situations where students have to

listen closely to the other person, realize the need to listen to each other, and become good listeners. Finally, with reflecting techniques, I can increase student awareness of their learning and give them an opportunity to become in charge of it.

My teaching and learning experiences helped me deduce that whoever my students are, whatever level I teach, I have to be myself and teach who I am, not to play the role of a teacher, but to take the risk of being vulnerable and human and honest. The foundation of community in my classroom is to learn myself well enough to know what style I have and when I am being truthful to myself. Community is not a skill or a technique that I can mimic. It is not something I do to other people. It is me, a teacher, and my moment-by-moment relationship with other human beings. In order to encourage a sense of community in my classroom I do not need to learn a lot of new techniques. I need to look closely at what I *really* want for my students, how I really feel about them. It is my attitude and intentions rather than my methodology that I may need to work on.

I suggest that foreign language teachers interested in building community in the classroom try to do the following:

- Give students opportunities to do things themselves.

- Worry less about teaching techniques and try to make the enabling of learning their main concern.
- Allow students practical experience in doing things (e.g. in *using* language rather than simply listening to lectures *about* language).
- Help students become more aware about *how* they are learning, reflect on this, and explore what procedures, materials, techniques, or approaches would allow them to learn more effectively.
- Let students make mistakes, allow them to try things out and get things wrong and learn from that.
- Be honest, patient, and approachable.
- Empathize with students' problems.
- Trust students, show respect, *really* listen to them, and give clear and positive feedback.

To sum up, I have gained a lot of useful insights from doing this project. My notions about the teaching/learning process have developed a new depth and relevance. The most important thing I have learned is that effective teaching is communal and it cannot be reduced to technique because it comes from the personalities of the teacher and the learner. Only when teachers and learners undeniably accept their interdependence in the

teaching-learning process, take risks together, empathize with each other, and trust each other will the teaching-learning relationship become a rewarding and creative experience for everyone in the classroom. Only when teachers keep their hearts open to their students and subject matter and inspire learners with their enthusiasm will a real learning community be built.

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

What Kind of Person Are You?

- 1. Are you a morning person or an evening person?**
- 2. Are you a tea person or a coffee person?**
- 3. Are you an indoor person or an outdoor person?**
- 4. Are you an earth person or a fire person?**
- 5. Are you a mountain person or a valley person?**
- 6. Are you a jungle person or a city person?**
- 7. Are you a garden person or a forest person?**
- 8. Are you a sight person or a sound person?**
- 9. Are you a diary person or a knotted handkerchief person?**
- 10. Are you a straight person or a loops and curves person?**
- 11. Are you a cat person or a dog person?**

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire

What Kind of Language Learner Are You?

1. Check the *three* activities you think are most similar to language learning and tell why.

Do you think learning a language is like:

learning to ride a bike ____ learning words in a play ____

learning to swim ____ learning dates for a history exam ____

learning to walk ____ learning a mathematical formula ____

learning to play chess ____ learning to play the piano ____

2. Try to number the sentences in order with 1 being the most useful way for you and 11 being the least useful way for you

learning grammar rules, with example sentences ____

doing a lot of grammar exercises ____

learning lists of vocabulary by heart ____

writing down the translation of every new word or phrase ____

reading as much as possible in class ____

speaking as much as possible in class ____

writing everything down in a notebook and learning it ____

forgetting about grammar and instead listening to people talking ____

getting the teacher to correct you every time you make a mistake ____

trying to think in English and not translate into you own language ____

writing essays and having them corrected by the teacher ____

- 3. What aspects of language do you feel you need the most help or practice with?
Number them in order: 1=need to practice most 7=need to practice least**

grammar ____

speaking ____

vocabulary ____

writing ____

reading ____

pronunciation ____

listening ____

- 4. How do you think the following people can help you best?**

your teacher

the other people in the group

yourself

APPENDIX C

Completion Sheet

I Am You

Imagine you are your partner and complete the sentences.

1. I like the color _____ because _____.
2. My favorite season is _____ because _____.
3. When I was at school I used to _____.
4. I enjoy _____.
5. I particularly dislike _____.
6. The kind of music I like best is _____.
7. I sometimes worry about _____.
8. My biggest fear is _____.
9. My ambition is to _____.
10. I like people who _____.
11. People like me because _____.
12. I get very angry if _____.
13. The funniest thing I ever saw was _____.
14. I'd like to be more _____ and less _____.
15. If I could be somewhere else now, I'd _____.

APPENDIX D

Departure Lounge

Sample Job Cards

You are a TV cameraman traveling to Africa to make a film about gorillas.
You are meeting the other members of the TV crew in the departure lounge.
Find the other members of the TV crew.

You are a TV producer traveling to Africa to make a film about gorillas.
You are meeting the other members of the TV crew in the departure lounge.
Find the other members of the TV crew.

You are a gorilla expert traveling to Africa to make a film about gorillas.
You are meeting the other members of the TV crew in the departure lounge.
Find the people who will be traveling with you.

You are a TV cameraman traveling to Africa to make a film about wildlife.
You are meeting the other members of the TV crew in the departure lounge.
Find the other members of the TV crew.

APPENDIX E

Paying Compliments

Sample Cards

Tell me something nice about my smile!

Say something nice about my pronunciation!

Tell me how good I am at something!

Say something nice about my clothes!

Tell me something nice about my children!

APPENDIX F

Questionnaire

Listeners

Try to think of all the situations in your life where you have been a listener.

- 1. Who do you enjoy listening to? Who do you dislike listening to? Why?**
- 2. Who listens to you? Are any of them the same people as in the first question?**
- 3. Who do you enjoy talking to? Who do you dislike talking to? Why?**
- 4. Who makes a good listener? Are these the same people as in the third question? What do they do to make you feel happy about talking to them?**

APPENDIX G

Speaking to a Brick Wall or to a Sympathetic Listener?

Role Cards

A1

You have a problem. You recently broke up with a man you loved and he married another girl. You have been going out with another man ever since. He's 30 and you are 26. Now he has asked you to marry him and you suppose you would be mad to refuse. But you don't love him, though you're fond of him. You live in a small village so you are unlikely to get another chance. You don't know what to do.

B1

A1 will tell you about a problem. You are not interested. Look out of the window, clean your nails, and yawn if you like, but don't pay any attention. Don't look at A1 while they are talking. When A1 has finished, talk about yourself: say something like "I saw a wonderful comedy on TV last night". Don't say anything about A1's problem.

A2

You have a problem. Last month your cousin asked to borrow some money. You didn't really want to lend him the money, but you did. That was seven weeks ago. He still hasn't paid you back. You saw him yesterday and he didn't mention it. Now you learn he's going to London on business tomorrow. You are very confused and don't really know how you feel about the situation. Describe to your partner what has happened, trying to explain your feelings about your cousin.

B2 = B1**B**

A is a good friend of yours. They look terribly upset, and you are sure they have a problem. Ask what's the matter, and if they want to talk about the problem. While A is talking, listen sympathetically. To help them describe their feeling to you, ask questions like:

Do you mean that...?

Are you saying that...?

What do you mean by...?

How did you feel about that...?

So now you feel...?

Offer advice. Try to be a really good listener!

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ashton-Warner, S. *Teacher*. New York: Touchstone/ Simon & Schuster, 1986.
- Burstall, C. "Factors Affecting Foreign- Language Learning: A Consideration of Some Recent Research Findings." *Language Teaching and Linguistics: Abstracts* 8:5-25, 1975.
- Curran, Charles. *Counseling-Learning: A Whole Person Model for Education*. E. Dubuque, Illinois: Counseling-Learning Publications, 1971.
- _____. *Counseling-Learning in Second Languages*. "Chapter 1: An Overview." Apple River Press, 1976.
- Douglas, T. *Groups: Understanding People Together*. London: Tavistock Press, 1983.
- Freeman, D. "Collaboration: Constructing Shared Understandings in the Second Language Classroom." In Nunan D *Collaborative Language Learning and Teaching*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Gardner, R. and Lambert, W. *Attitudes and Motivation in Second-Language Learning*. Newbury House, Rowley, Mass, 1972.
- Gardner, R. *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning: the Role of Attitudes and Motivation*. London, Ontario: Edward Arnold, 1985.
- Hare, P.A. *Creativity in Small Groups*. London: Sage Publications, 1982.

- Kolb, D.A. "The process of Experiential Learning." *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1984.
- Krashen, S. and Terrell, T. *The Natural Approach*. Pergamon, New York, 1983.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. and Long M. *An Introduction to Second Language Acquisition Research*. London and New York: Longman, 1991.
- Oxford, Rebecca. *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. Boston, Mass: Heinle and Heinle, 1990.
- McLeish, J. *The Psychology of the Learning Group*. London: Hutchinson, 1973.
- Palmer, Parker. *The Courage to Teach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publications, 1998.
- _____. "Evoking the Spirit in Public Education." *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 56, No.4 (December 1998-January 1999): 6 - 11.
- Peck, Scott. "Stages in Community Building." *In the Company of Others: Making Community in the Modern World*. New York: Claude Whitmyer, ed. Jeremy P. Tarcher/ Perigee Books, The Putnam Publishing Group, 1993.
- Rardin and Tranel. *Education in a New Dimension*. East Dubuque, Illinois: Counseling-Learning Publications, 1988.
- Richards, Jack and Rodgers, Theodore. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Schmuck, P.A. and Schmuck, R.A. *Group Processes in the Classroom*. Dubuque, IA: William Brown, 1976.

- Schumann, J. "Research on the Acculturation Model for Second Language Acquisition". *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 7: 379-92, 1986.
- Scovel, T. "The Affect of Affect on Foreign Language Learning: A Review of the Anxiety Research." *Language Learning* 28: 129-42, 1978.
- Somé, Malidona Patrice. *Ritual: Power, Healing and Community*. Portland, Oregon: Swan/ Raven and Company, 1993.
- Stevick, Earl. *Working With Teaching Methods: What's at Stake*. Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1998.
- Tirone, T. "A Glimpse Into the Counseling- Learning Approach to Community Language Learning." Department of Linguistics, University of Wisconsin, 1984.
- Tucker, Hamayan and Genesee. "Affective, Cognitive and Social Factors in Second Language Acquisition". *Canadian Modern Language Review* 32: 214-26, 1976.
- Ueland, Brenda. "Tell Me More: On The Fine Art of Listening". *UTNE Reader* (November/ December 1992): 104-109. Lens Publishing Company, Inc.
- White, L. "Is There a Logical Problem of Second Language Acquisition?" *TESL Canada* 2: 29-41, 1985.